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# Historic Leaves

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Somerville Historical Society

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# HISTORIC LEAVES

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE

Somerville Historical Society

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July 1909

# HISTORIC LEAVES

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VOL. VIII.

JULY, 1909

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## THE AUTHOR OF "MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB."

By Miss Mary A. Haley.

[Read Before the Somerville Historical Society December 8,  
1908.]

Columbus Tyler was born in Townsend, Vt., in 1805. He had no special education save the training of the farm, the home, the meeting-house, and the common school. At the age of twenty-one he came to Boston, and in a few months secured the position of attendant at the McLean Asylum in Somerville, Mass., and in a few years he had passed through all the grades of its services. He remained there thirty-six years. He was associated with such distinguished men as Dr. Wyman, Dr. Luther V. Bell, and Dr. Booth, and was on most friendly terms with those who succeeded him.

In 1835 he married Miss Mary E. Sawyer, of Sterling, Mass. In 1862 he gave up his position at the asylum, and built a handsome residence near the corner of Central and Summer Streets. This house is now occupied by the Unitarian minister and his wife. In the house are two full-length portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Tyler.

His taste and skill in laying out his grounds were remarkable. He knew the habits and history of all the trees on his grounds, and something of the parasites that fed upon them.

He was a representative to the State Legislature for two years, and the oldest vice-president in point of service in the Five Cents Savings Bank at Charlestown, Mass.

Many private trusts were confided to him, and although he had no children, his wards were numerous.

He was a man of pure habits and resolute purpose. "The dominant note in his character was justice, and the harmonies of his life were set in that key."

His "last will and testament" caused much comment. He

bequeathed his home and grounds to the Unitarian Society as a residence for the clergyman of the Unitarian parish. Social meetings connected with the church were to be held there. Children with their attendants were to have free access to the grounds. He established a flower mission, providing a sum of money to be used each year by a committee of ladies in furnishing flowers for the sick and the afflicted. He also left a sum of money to be put in the bank for every boy and girl, at a certain age, who shall regularly attend church and Sunday School. About four girls have benefited by this bequest.

Mr. Tyler died September 14, 1881.

#### MRS. MARY E. TYLER.

Somerville is rich in historic associations. We have the Old Powder House, where the ammunition was stored previous to the Revolutionary War, and Prospect Hill, where the first flag was raised in 1776.

Great men have walked our country lanes, Washington and Burgoyne, of olden times; Enneking, the artist, John G. Saxe, the poet, and Edward Everett, the preacher, have lived in later days within our borders. Even the Pundita Ramabai from the Far East has paid a flying visit to our city. No poet, artist, preacher, or historian is so well known among English-speaking people as the subject of this paper, the "Mary who had the little lamb."

It was by no conscious activity on her part that she became famous. She was one of those rare creatures who have greatness thrust upon them. Yet she bore her honors meekly.

Mary E. Sawyer was born in 1806 in the town of Sterling, Mass. It was through this town that King Philip marched, burning the houses and killing and taking captive the white people. She graduated from the schools of her native town, and then for a while taught school in Fitchburg. Her love for her little charges made her very popular, but her health failed, and she was obliged to seek a change of occupation.

In 1827 she secured a position in the McLean Asylum,

where she remained thirty-five years, the greater part of the time as matron. In her long career of usefulness she ministered with skill and affection to the sick and unfortunate. In 1835, while in this institution, she married Columbus Tyler, who was steward there at the time.

Mrs. Tyler and her husband were among the first founders of the Unitarian Church in this town. For many years she superintended the infant class in the Sunday School, and also interested herself in the larger work of the denomination.

When Mr. Tyler resigned from the asylum he built a spacious house on Central Street, and there Mrs. Tyler dispensed a gracious hospitality. She was interested in most of the city organizations, particularly the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Woman's Relief Corps.

On the north side of their house was a wild wood garden. In it she had every variety of fern and delicate wood flower. In her summer journeyings, when she saw a rare plant, she secured a specimen for her garden. Those most difficult of cultivation responded to her care. She gladly welcomed her little friends in the neighborhood to assist her in her work, and their assistance was not always helpful. On one occasion she left two little boys of five and six years to amuse themselves with shovel and wheelbarrow while she took a nap. When she came out she found the ferns entirely cleaned from one bed and thrown on the rubbish pile. Her only rebuke was a gentle: "My little dears, you have done a great deal of mischief, but you did not mean it." These two boys were Rollin T. Lincoln and Edward B. Raymond, who are now married and have children of their own.

Her friends were often the recipients of a beautiful bouquet, arranged with the skill of an artist, and the birthdays of the boys and girls in the neighborhood were always remembered with flowers. The lonely and bereaved welcomed her sympathetic visits. Always thinking of others, and never of herself, she lived a life of beneficence and charity, and died lamented by all who had the pleasure of her acquaintance. She died December 11, 1889, and was buried in Mt. Auburn.

The following account of the lamb is from the pen of a cousin, William Brewster Sawyer, and was published in the Boston Transcript:—

"MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB."

THE FAMOUS HISTORY FROM THE LIPS OF THE ORIGINAL MARY.

"There are floating about in the great ocean of literature stray chips of song or story, which from their wit or wisdom, or from some unaccountable reason, become popularized and cherished more carefully than whole navies of world-renowned authors. Their parentage unknown, they come as literary foundlings to our doors, and, once admitted, command their own place in our affections. Among such is the poem, 'Mary Had a Little Lamb.' There is hardly a child in the broad land who has not become familiar with the verses, nor a college student but has sung them to a dozen different tunes. It has been parodied, paraphrased, and translated into the dead languages. And yet scarce any one knows who is its author, or whether it is fictitious or founded on fact. It is perhaps in the truth of the story that the secret of its popularity lies. For it is the true account of an incident that happened years ago, not fifty miles from the Cradle of Liberty. The writer, on a recent visit, craved from her own lips the true story of the affair, and will reproduce it as nearly as possible.

"'It was when I was nine years old,' she said, 'and we lived upon the farm. I used to go out to the barn every morning with father to see the cows and sheep. They all knew me, and the cows, old Broad and Short-horn and Brindle, would low a good morning when I came to their stables. One cold day we found that during the night twin lambs had been born. You know that sheep will often disown one of twins, and this morning one poor little lamb was pushed out of the pen into the yard. It was almost starved and almost frozen, and father told me I might have it if I could make it live. So I took it into the house, wrapped it in a blanket, and fed it peppermint and milk

all day. When night came I could not bear to leave it, for fear it would die, so mother made me up a little bed on the settle, and I nursed the poor thing all night, feeding it with a spoon, and by morning it could stand. After this we brought it up by hand, until it grew to love me very much, and would stay with me wherever I went unless it was tied. I used before going to school in the morning to see that the lamb was all right and securely fastened for the day. Well, one morning, when my brother Nat and I were all ready, the lamb could not be found, and supposing that it had gone out to pasture with the cows, we started on. I used to be a great singer, and the lamb would follow the sound of my voice. This morning, after we had gone some distance, I began to sing, and the lamb, hearing me, followed on and overtook us before we got to the schoolhouse. As it happened, we were early, so I went in very quietly, took the lamb into my seat, where it went to sleep, and I covered it up with my shawl. When the teacher came and the rest of the scholars, they did not notice anything amiss, and all was quiet until my spelling class was called. I had hardly taken my place before the pattering of little feet was heard coming down the aisle, and the lamb stood beside me ready for its word. Of course the children all laughed, and the teacher laughed, too, and the poor creature had to be turned out of doors. But it kept coming back, and at last had to be tied in the woodshed till night. Now that day there was a young man in school, John Roulston by name, who was on a visit to one of the boys, and came in as spectator. He was a Boston boy, and son of the riding school master, and was fitting for Harvard College. He was very much pleased over what he saw in our school, and a few days after gave us the first three verses of the song. How or when it got into print I don't know.'

"Thus she ran on, telling of the care she bestowed on her pet until it grew to be a sheep, and she would curl its long wool over a stick; and it bore lambs until there was a flock of five all her own; and finally how it was killed by an angry cow. Then she brought out a pair of her little girl stockings, knitted of yarn



spun from the lamb's wool, the heels of which had been raveled out and given away piecemeal as mementoes.

"John Roulston died before entering college. What the world lost in him, who wove into verse that immortalized them both the story of Mary and the lamb, no one may say.

"William B. Sawyer."

The teacher was Miss Harriet Kimball, who afterwards became the wife of a Mr. Loring, and their son was the proprietor of the well-known circulating library in Boston.

John Roulston was the nephew of Rev. Samuel Capen, who was then settled in Sterling. The day after the lamb's visit to school young Roulston rode over to the schoolhouse and handed Mary the first three stanzas of the poem:—

"Mary had a little lamb,  
Its fleece was white as snow,  
And everywhere that Mary went  
The lamb was sure to go.

"It followed her to school one day,  
Which was against the rule;  
It made the children laugh and play  
To see a lamb at school.

"And so the teacher turned it out,  
But still it lingered near,  
And waited patiently about  
Till Mary did appear."

Of its snow-white wool she knitted some stockings, and in 1886, when the patriotic women of Boston wished to raise money for the preservation of the Old South Meeting-House, they asked Mrs. Tyler to assist by giving a pair of these stockings. She complied with their request. The stockings were raveled, and bits of the yarn fastened on cards on which she had written her name. These sold for a hundred dollars. A second pair was raveled, and another large sum was raised.

John Roulston gave Mary the poem in 1815. She and her



friends naturally inferred that he was the author of it. No question as to the authorship was raised till in 1829 Mrs. Sarah Josepa (Buell) Hale, afterwards editor of *Godey's Monthly*, published a volume of poems for children, and included in them were six stanzas, entitled "Mary Had a Little Lamb." The additional verses are:—

"And then it ran to her, and laid  
Its head upon her arm,  
As if to say, 'I'm not afraid,  
You'll keep me from all harm.'  
  
" 'What makes the lamb love Mary so?'  
The eager children cry;  
'Oh, Mary loves the lamb, you know,'  
The teacher did reply.  
  
'And you each gentle animal  
In confidence may bind,  
And make them follow at your will,  
If you are only kind.' "

If this was an incident in Mrs. Hale's life, as some of her friends assert, why doesn't the poem begin with "Sarah had a little lamb"? It has been printed "Lucy had a little lamb."

Mrs. Tyler's friends and Mrs. Hale's unflinchingly maintain their position. Mrs. Tyler's cousin, who lives in the same house in which she was born and married, deposed before a notary public that he attended school in the same schoolhouse, and that the facts referring to the incident of the lamb and the poem are true.

Both parties are honorable people, and the reasonable solution is that the verses are so simple that they almost make themselves, and when Mrs. Hale heard them in her childhood they became a part of her mental furniture, and for a time were forgotten. In later years memory unconsciously reproduced them as original forms, and she added the other three stanzas, believing that the entire poem was her own.

## REMINISCENCES OF SOUTHERN PRISON LIFE.

By George W. Bean.

[The following story was written for the Memorial, a paper edited by Miss Mary E. Elliot, and published May 30, 1878, under the auspices of Willard C. Kinsley (Independent) Relief Corps, of this city. It is a story of the experiences in rebel prisons of George Washington Bean, for many years a member of the Somerville police force. It is presented herewith to the Historical Society for re-publication in Historic Leaves, as a contribution to the Civil War history of Somerville.—Charles D. Elliot.]

Somerville sent three full companies of infantry to the war,—one three-months' company in 1861, one three-years' company in 1862, and one nine-months' company in 1862. I enlisted for three years in Company E, Captain F. R. Kinsley, attached to the Thirty-ninth Regiment, which left Boston August 12, 1862, for Washington, and did arduous service in the defences of that city for a year, when it crossed into Virginia, and joined the Army of the Potomac.

On October 11, 1863 (the date of General Meade's grand retreat from the Rapidan River), Judson W. Oliver, F. J. Oliver, W. Lovett, H. Howe, J. W. Whittemore, F. J. Hyde, and myself, all of Company E, six others of the regiment, and one from the Ninetieth Pennsylvania of our brigade, who had been on picket on that river, were surrounded by 20,000 of Stewart's cavalry and taken prisoners, with about 500 others. We were sent to Culpeper, and confined that night in an old meeting-house.

Next morning we went on cars to Gardenville, arriving at night, being lodged in a four-story brick tobacco factory called Bartlett's, or Libby No. 3. We were in this place about a month; while there H. Howe went to the hospital sick, and soon after died.

We were next sent to Pemberton's factory near this, or Libby No. 2, being just opposite Libby No. 1. In the latter prison none but commissioned officers were allowed. There

were three floors in these buildings, and prisoners constantly arriving. Two hundred and fifty men packed on each floor, with a strong guard, not being allowed near the windows; but at times the men would venture to look out, and sometimes saw old Jeff Davis ride by in his barouche.

Our usual rations for twenty-four hours were half a loaf of corn bread, a mouthful of beef or thin yellow pork, or a half-pint of thin rice soup. No light, no fire; Union songs were not allowed to be sung, but the boys would sometimes howl them. We were allowed for a short time to write eight lines at a time, of a domestic character, unscaled, to our friends at home. I received but one letter.

Our government sent a large supply of rations and clothing, but we could get but little of it, and many of the boys were obliged to sell their clothing and shoes to the rebels to obtain food; but they would not have done so had they known what the future had in store for them. On the morning of January 1, 1864, the rebel sergeant and aides came in, as usual, to call the roll. Before going out, he said: "See here, Yanks, I wish you all a Happy New Year, and many a one here." Jud Oliver thought that a very consoling remark, and only wished the rebel's stomach groaned as his did. A few days after we were taken out of this place, at two o'clock in the morning, and sent down to Belle Isle, two miles distant, a small, low island in James River, opposite Richmond. There was snow on the ground, and many of the men were barefoot and in their shirt sleeves, suffering much cold. It was so cold for several days that the river, which had quite a current, froze over, during which we had no shelter but our blankets. For wood the rebels gave us green logs; we had no axes to cut it, and it would not burn. The only way we could survive was to walk the island nights and sleep in the daytime; and I know of our men here imploring the guard to shoot them, to end their misery, and many were shot by going too near the lines. One night twenty-four died, or were shot in the trench. We were on the island nearly two months, and what little food we got was mostly un-

cooked, chiefly corn meal, ground with the cob, hog beans, and hard, dry corn bread.

The men's stomachs soon rebelled at this food, and sickness and death followed. One day, while there, a small cur dog ran through the guard lines into our camp; he was instantly pursued by scores of men, caught and despatched, cooked, and the next morning his remains were sold for hot chicken soup at a high price. Many who had money eagerly bought and devoured it. And I saw a poor fellow walk up and eat some raw hog beans which a man had vomited up, after overloading his stomach with them. About this time poor Jud Oliver was taken very sick, being feverish and delirious and unable to walk. I assisted him to the boat, and bade him good-by, as I supposed for the last time on earth, and he was taken to the Richmond Hospital. About a month afterwards a special parade of 10,000 sick and wounded prisoners on both sides was agreed upon, and Jud was lucky enough to be one of them, and it seems as if he bore a charmed life, from the fact that he went to the parade camp, went home on a furlough, joined his regiment, in the first battle was taken prisoner again, but was soon released, rejoined the regiment again, came home at the close of the war, has been a member of the Somerville police force several years, and almost any pleasant night he can be seen meandering along his beat in the vicinity of the Elm House, Professors' Row, and Alewife Brook. About March 1 Belle Isle was overcrowded, and 500 of us were sent on box cars 500 miles to Andersonville. It took five days and nights to go there; one man died in our car the second day, but was not removed until we arrived. It was one mile from the railroad into the stockade, which was to be our future camp ground.

I can assure you, readers, that I feel very loath to undertake to describe this place, and the many horrid, thrice horrid scenes we witnessed there during our six-months' stay. When we left Belle Isle the rebels told us we were going to be paroled; they always told us that story when a move was to be made. Imagine our feelings, then, when, at two o'clock on that dark

morning, we were driven into that pen! When daylight came we found that we were in a clearing of about fourteen acres, in the midst of a dense pine forest.

One lot of 500 men had preceded us, making 1,000 now here. The trees had been felled and trimmed into posts twenty feet long, driven into the earth about four feet apart, and connected by narrow boards to a height of about sixteen feet. On top, and about 100 feet apart, were roughly-constructed sentry boxes for guards, approachable from the outside only. On the inside of this stockade, about fifteen feet from it, running entirely around the yard, low posts were placed at intervals, having a narrow board nailed at the top from one to the other; this was called the "dead-line," as any one who touched that lumber was shot dead in his tracks; and I saw a poor fellow shot through the hip who had not touched, but stood near it. He died before morning, and it came near costing me my life, for, much incensed, I called the murderer a name that I will not repeat, and he, hearing me, aimed his gun at me, but I jumped behind a stump and lay there till evening; I changed my hotel before morning. We had plenty of wood, it being the limbs and tops of trees.

As we had no barracks, the only shelter the men had was their blankets. As the nights were cold, large bonfires were kept burning, by which we tried to keep warm; but most of us had been robbed of our blankets, and suffered a great deal from the cold. I saw many thousand men enter this prison robbed of their blouses, coats, haversacks, boots, shoes, caps, etc., by their captors.

Some of Sherman's men cut their bootlegs off and slit the uppers to make them worthless to the chivalric rebels into whose hands they fell. Near the end of the sixth month of my stay, the prison having been enlarged to twenty-four acres, containing 39,000 prisoners, 10,978 had died. The rations were brought in wagons driven by negroes. General Wirtz had command, without doubt the meanest looking specimen of a human villain one ever looked upon. The boys called him a



Dutchman, but I believe history calls him a Swede; he was dark, about five feet nine inches high, weighed about 125 pounds, spare, very stooping gait, a quick, short stepper; his dress was very nobby, generally citizen's of various hues; he wore a lady's fine gold chain about his neck, with several turns across his glow-worm-colored vest. When we arrived Wirtz detailed a number of our men to go outside and build log cabins for his quarters and other purposes; these men had to take the oath of honor not to go more than one mile from the stockade. Going out at sunrise, they came in at sunset; for their hard day's labor they received an extra ration.

Wirtz and the officers of the guard came in every morning to count us for rations, and to see if any had escaped through the night, the men standing in line in two ranks. The whole were divided into detachments of from twenty-five to 250 each. Our sergeant had charge of the rations for each squad, and if any men were missing, they were held responsible, and the rations of the whole camp would be stopped until some man divulged when, where, and how he or they got out. Many times we got no rations for three days, but finally the secret was starved out of some man who knew. They generally escaped by the tunnel process, as follows: A party would put three blankets together, get as near the dead line as practical, erect a booth or tent, and pretend to dig a well inside of about six feet in diameter, the soil here being sandy, without a stone. Having dug to the depth of twelve or fifteen feet, they would start a hole, as high up as they could reach from the bottom (about five or six feet from the surface), a trifle larger than a man's body, and with their hands paw the sand from the tunnel hole into the well when the tunnel was beyond the stockade; the men would then wait for a dark, stormy night, and then "git." I had a hand in one of these tunnels with some sailors, Austin Littlefield, of East Somerville, being one of them. We had worked it for weeks, when the day preceding the night we had selected to go out, a traitor informed on us, and Wirtz, with a strong guard, came in and crushed it. The next day the traitor was discov-



ered, and he was taken by the rebels from the hands of our men more dead than alive. He never came inside again.

Several of these tunnels caved in upon the men when in them, and numbers were killed; although many got out this way, few escaped to our lines. Wirtz kept a large pack of bloodhounds, which tracked our boys ere they could get far. When caught, they were kept outside in what was called the chain gang. Their wrists would all be chained together, and each dragged a ball and chain; when one went they all went, and all took step together; few survived the treatment long.

Andersonville was composed of two long, sloping hills; at the very foot of these, and in the centre of the camp, was a brook. When we entered, scraggy trees and poisonous vines completely filled the brook, and it could be called nothing but a bog; but in time, as the woods grew scarce, the men dug out these trees, vines, and even the small roots, several feet under ground, and after much work made a canal of it, about twenty feet wide, and in dry time about six inches deep. The brigade of rebels who guarded us were in camp just outside the stockade, on a hill sloping down to this brook. They washed all their clothes and bathed in it, and we were obliged to drink the dirty water; it produced a great deal of sickness and death. The men protested to Wirtz, but in vain; and it was a common remark of the rebels to us that, the more they could kill in this and other ways, the less they would have to feed and fight. Often at roll-call many of the men were so sick and weak that they could not stand, and would sit on the ground, and often have I seen that beast Wirtz walk up and kick them like dogs. Wirtz always wore a belt; in it he carried two large revolvers. Once when I was sick and had eaten nothing for several days, one morning at roll-call, it being very warm, I was unable to stand, and sat in the rank. Wirtz came up near me, and, drawing a revolver from his belt, said: "If that Yank don't stand up in the rank, I'll put fire to him." The men on each side of me quickly raised me up and held me until Wirtz passed out. As time passed on, the rations grew small. The more prisoners, the worse the

fare; the meals were cooked outside. At one time they pretended to make a mush, or duff, in large tanks containing hot water. The unsifted meal ground with the cob would be thrown into these by the barrel. When taken out and issued to us, unsalted, a little of the outside would be cooked, but inside was raw. Once in a while a little rice or a few black beans, cooked just as they were picked, pods, strings, and dirt, but often raw, were given us. For a while our rations were but a pint of cornmeal, they saying it was all they had to give us, that we were eating them out of house and home, and for many days I drew my rations in my hands and ate it dry, being very thankful to get that.

The last of August 500 of us were sent on cars to Savannah, into another stockade. In a few days 10,000 men had arrived. We were here about six weeks; rain fell most of the time, and once for three days the camp was flooded to our knees.

We could not lie down, and, with many others, I got the fever and ague. For six weeks I suffered terribly. I was then sent to Blackshire Station, near the Florida line, where we stayed two weeks. From there we were sent to Fort Darling to be paroled. On the way I escaped from the train, and, being very tired, lay down under a tree for the night. At sunrise we saw the train pass out of sight; we started down the river, hoping to get to our gunboats, but at sundown three squads of rebel pickets suddenly appeared around us, and took us to the Oglethorpe Guard House in Savannah.

They kept us here three days, and in that time twenty-nine more of our boys were brought in. Many others were shot in the attempt to escape, and we were all put into a car and sent to Charleston (S. C.) jail. Next day they marched us through the city, and we had the opportunity of seeing the havoc that shot and shell from our harbor forts had made. From here we were sent on cars to Florence, S. C., and put into another stockade; this was on December 1, 1864.

There were 10,000 men here, and I found among them many Massachusetts boys, some of them my old schoolmates; but

there was a sad contrast in their appearance here and when I last saw them.

They told me I had come to an awful place, but when I told them my story they were silent. But there was great suffering and death here; it was a second Andersonville, in proportion to numbers; the rations grew smaller every day. We were next taken to Wilmington, N. C. We camped outside the city, for our navy was shelling the place at the time, and our generals would not agree on armistice for the parole of prisoners. We were sent back to Goldsboro riding on open cars. At this time I was barefoot, and there being a heavy frost, my feet were frost-bitten.

The rebels appointed six of our men nurses, to care for the sick, and I was one of them; it then being near a parole, they wished to save every man possible. In attending to the wants of so many sick, I neglected myself, and contracted a severe cold, which a few days after settled into a fever; but I managed to keep up until we went on board our transports. Wilmington was taken, our troops took possession of the city, and marched ten miles from it into the interior towards Goldsboro; then an armistice for parole of prisoners was agreed upon, and they went into camp. We were sent again on the cars to them, the train halted in the woods, and there for the first time for many months we beheld the glorious old banner of the free, moving defiantly. To us it was a glorious sight, and many of the men wept like children. General Schofield received us, and made an address, in which he said: "I expected to behold a hard-looking body of men, but I did not expect to look upon a mass of living skeletons." He then turned his head away and wept for a moment, then, turning to the men, he gave each good advice about eating, etc. Had some of them heeded it, they would probably have saved their lives.

Most of the troops here were colored, and they gave us a warm greeting. They had erected large arches of evergreen, through which we passed, and a band of music stationed at each arch played the national airs. After passing

through the camp ground, we halted on a beautiful lawn for the night. The troops had here provided for us a bountiful collation of hot coffee, hard tack, and fresh beef.

Of course the men were ravenous, and, their stomachs being very weak, it proved to be a fatal meal to many of them. The next morning we walked to Wilmington, and in the evening went on board a transport steamer, bound for Annapolis, Md. We were three days in going, in a severe storm, and I had a raging fever. Arriving at the wharf, I was carried on a stretcher to the Naval School Hospital, and for three days I did not open my eyes. The surgeon told me that the only medicine he could give me for several days was a little cordial on a sponge pressed to my teeth; he gave up all hope of my recovery, but a kind Providence ruled otherwise. Having good care, I recovered.

When I was able to walk they showed me a box they had expected to put me in. I was here about a month. As soon as the sick were able to be moved, they were sent to hospitals in other cities, this being the nearest landing to rebeldom. I was next sent to Camden Street Hospital in Baltimore, and here I suffered terribly with my frozen feet.

I was here nearly a month, and most of that time I could not bear even the weight of a sheet on them. The surgeon tried every cure he could think of, but I got no relief, until finally I tried the cold water cure. It was a great risk, but in a short time it cured them.

There were about 500 men in this hospital. As soon as I was able to walk, I received a twenty-days' furlough to go home.

When I arrived in Somerville my father did not know me. I had been mourned for dead, having been reported so at the State House three times. My furlough having expired, I reported back to the hospital. Feeling pretty well, I was anxious to join my regiment, but the surgeon would not let me go. Being anxious to do something, I was appointed chief of the culinary department. On May 18, 1865, I was discharged from the hospital, and, with my back pay, my discharge papers, and a new

suit of blue, I bade them all good-by, took the cars for Washington, D. C., the boat for Alexandria, and climbed over Arlington Heights, where I found my old regiment. But they were few compared with when I last saw them.

I remained until the joyful news of peace was proclaimed; then I returned home.

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## THE WALNUT HILL SCHOOL.

By Frank M. Hawes.

[Read Before the Somerville Historical Society February 9,  
1909.]

From a perusal of the names of persons selected year by year to look after the interests of the outlying schools of Charlestown, it will be safe to conclude that a school district, extending well up to Arlington Centre from the Powder House, was in existence by 1730, or as early as the more famous one, long known as the Milk Row School, whose history has appeared in *Historic Leaves*.

From 1790, and for a number of years thereafter, this school, which we have designated by its location the Alewife Brook School, was known as School No. 3. Previous to 1786 there was no public school building. We are justified in making this statement from several references on the town records to private rooms that were hired for school purposes.

In the warrant, February 28, 1785, for the coming town meeting is the following: "To know the minds of the town, what they will do with regard to two petitions presented by the people at the upper end of the town requesting that one or more schoolhouses may be built there." March 7 it was voted to build two schoolhouses in that section (No. 1 being in the Gardner neighborhood), and May 1, 1786, the bills for the same, £10 each, were paid. The next November William Whittemore and



Philemon Russell were empowered to lay a floor, make seats, and lay a hearth at the school which we are now considering, but which was designated in that one instance "the Russells' School." Very appropriate would it have been if this name, thus unofficially reported, had been retained. Had such been the case, we might to-day be proud in having one school, at least, with a name perpetuating memories of an earlier time. As it is, none of our school buildings has a name which antedates the incorporation of Somerville in 1842.

May 10, 1802, we read that the schoolhouse near Alewife Bridge is to be repaired at an expense not exceeding \$100. At that time, or later, we conclude that this building, less than twenty years old, had been considerably damaged by fire, for the trustees are given discretion to repair or build anew. May 3, 1803 (1805?), the reported expense for rebuilding, in addition to \$100 previously voted, was \$400.

Some time after 1801, but before 1812—the school records for that period are lost—this school was known as No. 4. The change was necessitated by the creation of a new district at the Neck. For the year last mentioned No. 4 had an attendance of thirty-four scholars, a number which did not vary materially from that time to the very end of its existence, although in 1814 we read of a membership of fifty-eight, at which time we have the first recorded name of a teacher there, that of Jacob Pierce, or "Master Pierce," as he was called. The next winter we find him teaching this same school, when he received \$123.75 for his services. The two brothers, Philemon R., Jr., and Levi Russell, were pupils of Master Pierce, a very good teacher, but tradition says that he used to fortify himself for his daily duties in the schoolroom by carrying a little "black strap" in his boot-leg! He was a fine penman, and made all his pupils "good writers."

April 3, 1818, the trustees examined School No. 4, when about forty scholars were present out of a total of fifty-two. J. Underwood was the teacher. This was without doubt James Underwood, afterwards one of the trustees, who died in office March 4, 1840.



March 18, 1819, the school received its customary visit, when J. Haywood, then in charge, is pronounced an excellent teacher, and his school gives a fine exhibition. The male teachers next named were Simeon Booker, for the winter of 1819-'20, and Mr. Colburn, for 1820-'21. Nothing has been learned of these gentlemen; the latter may have been Joshua O. Colburn, who taught the Milk Row School a few seasons later. At his examination, March 22, 1821, twenty-two girls and fifteen boys were present out of an enrollment of fifty-four. "The school was addressed by Rev. (Edward) Turner, and closed with prayer."

From time to time the records give us the names of the trustees in charge of this district. For the years 1822-'23 the school near "elewife bridge" was superintended by Samuel (P.) Teel. The next year James Russell was in charge. An oil portrait of this gentleman may be seen at Arlington in the home of a descendant. For 1826-'27 Nathaniel H. Henchman was the local trustee. This gentleman, who lived in what was later known as the Porter residence, and later still as the Morrison-Durgin place, died while in office that year.

The first lady teacher in this district whose name has come down to us was Miss Sarah Perry, who taught during the spring, summer, and autumn of 1825. The late Mrs. Lucretia Russell Carr, granddaughter of the above-named James Russell, vividly remembered Miss Perry, who was her first teacher. Her words were: "She boarded with my grandmother and I liked her." Mrs. Carr was then but three years old.

Other female teachers of this period were Hersina Knight, 1826, and Miss Ann Brown, 1827, the latter of whom, on being transferred to a school in Old Charlestown, was succeeded July 3 by Elizabeth Gerrish. Later Miss Gerrish taught the lower Winter Hill School. For the summer of 1828 Miss Miranda Whittemore was engaged, a daughter of Jonathan Whittemore, of West Cambridge. His homestead is still standing on Massachusetts Avenue (nearer to Boston than the John P. Squire estate). Miss Whittemore was the first teacher of Mrs. Susanna

Russell Cook, to whom the writer of these pages is greatly indebted for information. She must have been a good teacher, as she was employed for several seasons. Later she became the wife of a Mr. Butterfield, a neighbor's son.\*

We now come to the name of Philemon R. Russell, Jr., who seems to have been first employed as a teacher in his home district for the winter of 1825-'26. For a number of winters after that, although not consecutively, we find him thus engaged. It was he who taught the last winter term, 1841-'42, under Charlestown control, and also the first and second winters after Somerville was established. Mr. Russell was employed more than once to teach at West Cambridge, in the district known as "the Rocks." Philemon Robbins Russell was born January 2, 1795, and died June 6, 1863, at the age of sixty-eight. He received his education in an academy at Lexington. Russell Street of this city was named for him, and it was in that neighborhood that he lived and died. He married Miss Mary Wilkins, of Unity, N. H., and was survived by two daughters, Mary M., the wife of Edwin R. Prescott, and Susan E., the second wife of the late Amos Haynes. The annual report of the trustees for 1838-'39 says of Mr. Russell: "His efforts and skill are worthy of the highest commendation. He insisted upon the thoroughness of all his pupils. His uniform practice is, if a pupil makes a blunder in recitation, he is compelled afterwards to repeat that part of his answer correctly, as a word going around the class must be spelled correctly by each one who has failed, no matter how much time it takes."

After 1829 our school, which is sometimes designated on the records as the West Cambridge Road School, was officially known as District No. 6. During the following winter, 1830-'31, James Swan was appointed to teach in the "Russell District." He completed the term, and the next year at the "Female Writing School, Charlestown," closely followed Reuben Swan, who had resigned February 2, 1832. According to Wyman, who

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\*Arlington Vital Records: Samuel Butterfield and Miranda Whittemore were married January 31, 1839,

gives this line of Swans, Reuben and James, the latter born in Dorchester in 1809, were the sons of Reuben Swan, Sr., and Ruth Teel, who were married in 1804. Seven of their sons, including the two mentioned, were school teachers. According to my informants, this family at one time lived on North Street, West Somerville, on the old Cook place, which had originally belonged to the Teels (the mother's people).

The winter term for 1831-'32 was taught by S. N. Cooke. Mrs. Carr told me that he was an Englishman, and a fine man. She was twelve years old that winter. During the next year there were two teachers for the winter term. Joseph S. Hastings, of Shrewsbury, who had taught a term in the Gardner District (sometimes called the Woburn Road School), seems not to have been successful. January 28, 1833, he requested to be discharged from his duties, "with reasons," and the trustees granted his petition. Philemon R. Russell, Jr., finished out the term.\*

Miss Whittemore, who had taught acceptably for five successive summers, was succeeded in 1833 by Miss Kezia Russell, daughter of William Adams and Kezia Teel Russell, and an elder sister of the late Mrs. Carr and the late Mrs. Rebecca Russell Stearns. Two years later Miss Kezia was again in charge. Soon after this she married a Mr. Hatch, a farmer of Saugus.

For the winter of 1833-'34 H. K. Curtis, of Stoughton, was the teacher for four months, at a salary of \$30 per month. He had forty-one pupils. He was liked as a teacher, and boarded in the family of Philemon R., Sr.† Other male teachers, besides Philemon R. Russell, for the winter school, after Mr. Cur-

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\*Shrewsbury Records: Joseph Southgate Hastings, son of Jonas and Lucy, born June 8, 1796, Joseph S. Hastings and Joanna Newton, of Westboro, married at West Cambridge June 14, 1833.

†Hiram Keith Curtis, of Stoughton, graduated from Harvard College in the class of 1833. He was made A. M., and died in 1888 at East Stoughton, now Avon. After graduation he adopted the profession of civil engineer. He entered the office of Loammi Baldwin at Charlestown, and remained there a number of years. About ten years after graduating, while shooting, he met with an accident by which he lost an eye and one hand. This incapacitated him for his work. After that he retired to his old home.

tis and before the separation from Charlestown, were: Henry J. Jewett,\* 1834-'35; Norwood P. Damon, son of Parson Damon, of West Cambridge, and later employed as a teacher in the Prospect Hill School†; Samuel (or Richard) Swan, not related to the other Swan family; Levi Russell, 1836-'37, and again 1840-'41,‡ who was also employed at Prospect Hill, and whose career as a teacher we shall endeavor to notice in some future paper; and George P. Worcester, 1837-'38. By chance we have preserved for us the names of nine pupils who went to Levi Russell during the winter of 1840-'41. We also have very creditable specimens of their penmanship dating from that time. Their names and ages were: Aaron P. Dickson, eleven years; Elisha Frost, seventeen years; John A. Magoun, thirteen years; Emeline Teel, thirteen years; Horatio Teel, fourteen years; Louisa Teel, thirteen years; Thomas E. Teel, sixteen years; Louisa H. Winnik, twelve years; Mary Warren.

For the summer of 1834 Miss Martha McKoun, of Charlestown, was the teacher. Mrs. Cook remembers her well. Wyman's "Charlestown" says that John McKoun, printer, by wife Abigail had a daughter, Martha K., born June 22, 1816. The year 1836 is interesting, as it introduces to us the name of that faithful and very efficient teacher, Miss Sarah M. Burnham,

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\*Henry James Jewett, born in Portland in April, 1813, brother of Hon. Jedediah Jewett, mayor of Portland, and collector of the port; graduated from Bowdoin in 1833 with honor. He entered on the study of law at the Harvard Law School. He located at Austin, Tex., where he was county attorney and judge of probate. He served on the staff of Governor Houston. In 1870, while on a visit to New York, he died. He was married and left children.

†Damon Genealogy, page 55, etc.: Rev. David Damon (grave at Arlington), born in Wayland September 12, 1787; graduated from Harvard in 1811; studied theology in the Cambridge Divinity School; ordained at Lunenburg in 1815; installed at West Cambridge in 1835; died June 25, 1843, in his fifty-sixth year; made D. D. by Harvard the day before his death; married October 16, 1815, Rebecca Derby, of Lynnfield; she died in Boston in October, 1852 (born in 1787). Son, Norwood, born in Lunenburg October 7, 1816; never married; resided in Boston.

‡The Russells told the writer that George Swan lived at Arlington, and used to drive past every day on the way to school. On records I find George Swan and Eliza Ramsdell, intention, August 24, 1834.

who began her labors in Charlestown at the Russell District (or was it at Gardner Row?). Later she was transferred to Winter Hill for a term, and then to Milk Row, but it was in Cambridge that she made one of the grandest of records. (See *Historic Leaves*, Vol. VII., No. 2.)

Other teachers for the summer, up to the formation of Somerville, were Miss Mary B. Gardner in 1837, Miss Clara D. Whittemore for 1838, '39, and '40, and Miss Elizabeth A. Caverno for 1841. Miss Gardner was the daughter of Miles Gardner, who resided just over the Alewife Brook on the Arlington side. She married a Mr. Pierce, and was last known to be living at an advanced age in Dedham, where she had a daughter who was a teacher in the public schools there.\* "Miss Whittemore," the trustees' report says, "brought the school from a state of confusion to one of discipline," and inspired so much confidence that she was hired by the newly-elected committee of Somerville to resume her position at this school in 1842. At her examination, Friday, October 28, 1842, there were present of the committee Messrs. Hawkins, Allen, Adams, Russell, and Hill. Miss Whittemore came of a West Cambridge family.† Miss Caverno, according to the printed genealogy of her family, was born November 29, 1829, and died November 19, 1855. She was the granddaughter of Jeremiah and Margaret (Brewster) Caverno, and daughter of Arthur and Olive H. (Foss) Caverno. Her people were of Canaan, N. H., or vicinity. While teaching here she boarded at the Gardners', next door to the schoolhouse.

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\*Arlington Vital Records: Mary Gardner and Oliver Pierce, intention, December 25, 1842; Miles T. Gardner, of Dedham, and Martha E. Cotting, May 21, 1838.

Dedham Records: Oliver Pierce, of Dedham, and Miss Mary Gardner, of West Cambridge, intention, December 25, 1842.

†Perhaps she was this one (Arlington Records): Clarissa Davis Whittemore, daughter of Amos, Jr., born March 6, 1812, Paige's Cambridge; Amos, son of Amos Whittemore, married Rebecca Russell, of Charlestown, April 22, 1814. Clarissa D., their fourth child, baptized May 17, 1812; fifth child was Amos, a merchant and inventor; sixth child was James Russell Whittemore, born in 1818. Mrs. Cook says that Clara D. died of a cancer and unmarried.



Other names of teachers at this school, not found upon the records, but vouched for by my informants, were: Ruth, daughter of Luke Wyman; Jason Bigelow Perry,\* of Rindge, N. H., and brother of Miss Perry already mentioned; a Mr. Munroe; and Miss Georgiana Adams, of Medford.

During the summer of 1838 repairs were made on the school building, under the direction of the local trustees, Alfred Allen and James Underwood, at an expense of \$248.74. From December, 1839, when the first grammar school on Somerville soil was established at Prospect Hill, until the division of the town, the school we have been considering was known as the "ungraded district school in the Russell District."

On the formation of Somerville in 1842, and the separation of school districts, this old school building passed into the possession of Arlington. As no provision could be made at once for a schoolhouse in Somerville, the spring and summer term, as I am informed, was kept in the old quarters, and from our first school report we learn that Miss Clara D. Whittemore received \$72 for six months' services in the Russell District. It may be interesting to know that this venerable and useful structure is still in existence. Some time in the 1840's, about 1845 or 6, my informant (F. E. Fowle) thinks, it was moved farther up into Arlington, and during the past sixty years has done duty as a tenement house. It stands on Franklin Street, fifth house on the right from the main street, and is numbered 35.

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\*Rindge (N. H.) Town History: John Perry (James and Lydia), baptized in West Cambridge in 1755; married (second wife) Abigail Bigelow, daughter of Jason and Abigail (Witt) Bigelow, of Marlboro. Of their children, Sarah, born June 12, 1793, died unmarried March 19, 1842. The youngest of the family was Jason Bigelow Perry, born September 27, 1801. Colonel J. B. Perry lived on the homestead in Rindge. He showed commendable interest in the welfare of the town, the schools, and all laudable public enterprises. He was an influential and useful citizen, and was much employed in public affairs. He received a commission in the Twelfth Regiment of Militia, and retired with the rank of colonel. He served in the Legislature of 1852 and 1853; was selectman sixteen years; chairman of War Committee during the Rebellion; for thirty years treasurer of the Congregational Society. He married November 11, 1828, Sally Wilson, daughter of Major Supply and Sally (Scripture) Wilson, of New Ipswich. They had nine children. He was living in 1875.





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